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On Showing an Extraordinary Sign at the Moment of Death Owing to Devotion to Buddhist Studies and Spreading the Teaching for the Benefit of All Beings¹

The late Dharma Master Dōshō 道照² belonged to the Fune 船 family³ in Kawachi province.⁴ Under the emperor's auspices⁵ he went abroad for Buddhist studies to T'ang China, where he met and studied with Hsüan-tsang san-tsang 玄奘三藏.⁶ This master said to his other disciples, "This man will teach many on his return home. You should not slight him but guide him well."

After completing his studies, he came home to establish a meditation hall, called Zen'in-ji 禪院寺,⁷ and he lived there. His virtue in keeping the precepts⁸ attained perfection, while his wisdom was a constant source of light as clear as a mirror. He traveled far and wide, proclaiming Buddhist teaching to all beings. When he grew older, he remained at the meditation hall and lectured on the essentials of the scriptures he had brought back from China.

At the time of his death, he purified himself in the bath,⁹ changed his clothes, and seated himself facing west.¹⁰ Light filled the room, and he opened his eyes and asked his disciple Chichō 知調,¹¹ "Did you see the light?" Chichō replied, "Yes, I did." Then Master Dōshō asked him not to tell others of it. Very early the next morning¹² a light emanated from the hall and moved round to illuminate the pine trees in the garden. Presently it flew away to the west. All of his disciples were struck with wonder, and it was at that very moment that the Most Venerable Master passed away seated calmly, facing west.

We are sure of his rebirth in the pure land of bliss.¹³ The note says: This member of the Fune family is extraordinary and not common, for he exemplified virtue, traveled far to seek for Buddhist scriptures,¹⁴ and ended his life in radiant light.

1. Cf. *Shoku Nihongi* (I, Monmu 4:3:10), *Fusō ryakki* (IV, V), *Genkō shakusho* (I, 1, i), *Sanbō ekotoba* (II, 2), *Konjaku monogatari* (XI, 4), etc. See Chap. I(1)d.

2. He went to T'ang China in 653, returned in 661, and founded the Hossō School in Japan. See Chap. I(1)a, n. 6, and d, n. 105. His was the first recorded cremation in Japan, in 700.

3. The Fune family is descended from Ō Shin-ni 王辰爾 of Paekche. (See *Nihon shoki*, XIX, Kinmei 14:7; XXIV, Kōgyoku 4:4:12.) In the early history of Japanese Buddhism, immigrants' descendants played a significant role, and many became eminent monks. See Chap. I(1)c, n. 61.

4. The *Shoku Nihongi* says he is of Tajihi district in Kawachi province, that is, present Fujiidera-shi, Ōsaka-fu 大阪府藤井寺市.

5. Emperor Kōtoku sent envoys to China accompanied by student monks, among whom Dōshō's name is found. See *Nihon shoki* (XXV, Hakuchi 4:5:12); Aston, "Nihongi," II, 242-244.

6. (d. 664) An eminent monk and the most famous T'ang pilgrim to India. He went to China in 629 and came back in 645 with many Buddhist scriptures. He dedicated himself to the task of translating as many as seventy-three items. He is also known as the author of the *Ta-T'ang hsi-yü chi* 大唐西域記 (Records of the Western Regions). 三藏 *san-tsang* means the Three Baskets of the Buddhist Canon, *tripitaka*. In China it is also used as an honorific title for those well-read in the Buddhist scriptures or those who translate them. See Thomas Watters, *On Yuan Chuang's Travels in India*, 2 vols.

7. A temple which was built at the southeastern corner of Gangō-ji at Asuka in 662 and later moved to Nara in 711. See Fujino Michio, "Zen'in-ji kō," *Shigaku zasshi*, LXVI (No. 9, September 1957), 1-43.

8. 戒珠 *kaishu*; perfection of virtue is symbolized in a gem.

9. Purification with water is an important rite in the Japanese native tradition as well as in the Buddhist tradition.

10. "The west" indicates the western pure land of Amida. Accordingly, this passage is taken as an indication that Dōshō had faith in rebirth in the pure land, though this fact cannot be proved. Traditionally, the Hossō School was known for its connections with the Maitreya cult, but, among the Buddhist scriptures Dōshō brought back from China, there is one belonging to the Pure Land School, *Ōjō raisan* 往生禮讚 (see Ishida, *Shakyō yori mitaru Narachō Bukkyō no kenkyū*, 24-30). In Kyōkai's lifetime, a tradition developed, even within the circle of the Hossō School, which held that Dōshō and Gyōgi attained rebirth in Amida's pure land. See Inoue Mitsusada, *Nihon Jōdokyō seritsushi no kenkyū*, 74-81. For *Ōjō raisan*, see II. 20, n. 1.

11. Unknown.

12. 後夜 *goya*; about 3-5 a.m.

13. 極樂淨土 *gokuraku jōdo*; see Chap. I(1)a, n. 16.

14. Kariya's text gives 求法性 instead of 求法藏. In that case it means "seek for the Hossō School teaching." Based on the fact that the usage of 法性 is limited to the period 749-790, Fujino infers that this biography was written independently of the *Shoku Nihongi* during the Nara period. (See his "Zen'in-ji kō.")